

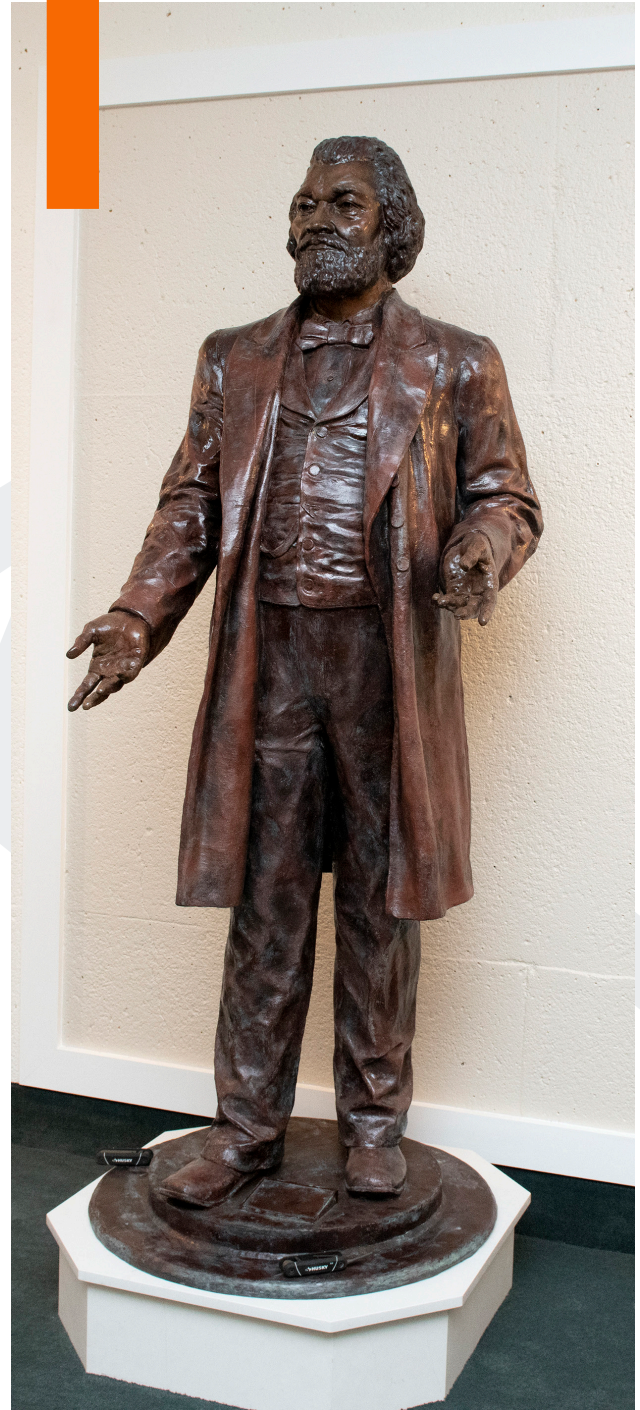
RIT Action Plan for Race and Ethnicity

Early in 2020, a global pandemic became the canvas upon which the police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Daniel Prude, and others would be forever painted. The tragic events of 2020 have brought into public light a host of systemic racial inequities and injustices.

As a leader in higher education, RIT is compelled to reexamine our own history, renew and refocus our existing commitments, and expand our reach and effort by leveraging our passion to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive society.

APRIL 21, 2021

Rochester Institute of Technology



Introduction:

RIT's commitment to diversity and social justice is a core value of the university, evolving over time since its founding in 1829. RIT was one of the earliest schools to admit women, and the only national university with an entire college dedicated to the education of deaf and hard-of-hearing populations.

With the 1968 founding of the student-organized Black Awareness Coordinating Committee (BACC) and the attention its members brought to the low representation of Black students at RIT, increasing the number of non-white students became a priority of the university. RIT also introduced a "Black studies program" in 1968 that offered courses in African-American History; Nativism, Racism, and Anti-Semitism; West African History; and Sociology of Intergroup Relations.¹ RIT was clearly in the vanguard of such curricular innovations: the first Black Studies department in the nation was founded at San Francisco State College in 1968.

Between 1976 and 1984, enrollment of Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students was low (see Appendix A), ranging from ~ 3.1% to 5%¹, but in line with other U.S. schools. The first concrete diversity plan for the Institute was developed in 1980, with the goal of increasing "the number of minority and disadvantaged students in the RIT community, both faculty and students."²

From the early 1980's on (see Appendix A), the university's commitment to diversifying student, faculty, and staff populations intensified (see Appendix B), as reflected by the development of new offices, positions, services, plans, and celebrations.

Within higher education, RIT has one of the largest commitments in the nation, both programmatically and financially, to diversity, equity and inclusion. RIT's Division of Diversity and Inclusion, headed by a vice president, employs 38 staff members who execute more than 80 programs and initiatives facilitated by an annual budget of approximately \$4.8M, including grant-funds. This expenditure does not include special scholarship programs such as the Destler/Johnson Rochester City Scholars.

These efforts have not only borne fruit internally; they have garnered national attention. In 2015, RIT was named a "Diversity Champion" by the national magazine *INSIGHT Into Diversity*. The INSIGHT editors write:

"Known for visionary leadership, Diversity Champions are institutions that set the standard for thousands of other campus communities striving for diversity and inclusion. They develop successful strategies and programs, which then serve as models of excellence for other institutions. Diversity Champion schools exceed everyday expectations, often eclipsing their own goals."³

¹ It's difficult to know what is meant by "program" here, since concentrations in the College of General Studies, which were the first collection of related courses that could be called a program, were not introduced until the early 1980's. of related courses in the College of General Studies were introduced.

² RIT Archive Collections. [Minority students collection](#). Historical Information for Minority Students at RIT. 1906, 1961–1989.

³ INSIGHT Into Diversity. [Diversity Champions](#). 2020.

The honor was repeated in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and, most recently, in 2020.

This said, RIT is always looking to improve. Indeed, RIT must improve. RIT acknowledges the longstanding history of the unfair and oppressive treatment in higher education and at RIT of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and LGBTQIA+ communities. Recognizing this as well as the country's growing racial disparities, RIT is more committed than ever to grow in its diversity and create an environment that allows diversity to thrive. This plan, specifically, is designed to address anti-racism against Blacks because that is the arena where the most progress is needed. There is a strong feeling amongst the RIT community that RIT 1) educate the RIT community about the history of racism and its ongoing impact, both at and beyond RIT; 2) enhance a greater sense of belonging for all to the RIT community; 3) employ greater outreach, recruitment and retention of African American, Latino American (*Latinx*) and Native American (AALANA)⁴ students, faculty and staff; 4) require diversity education at all levels; and 5) convey the essence of RIT's diversity story in all its form. In some cases, implementation of the suggested improvements will require redeployment of existing resources to new, higher priorities. In other cases, the university will need to generate new resources.

Even before the spring of 2020, a sizable gap remained between where the university is now and where it needs to be in order to deliver fully on the promises of equal access, equal opportunities, and equal respect for all students, faculty and staff. Parts of the current strategic plan address this gap, as do various divisional goals and strategies.

But the summer's tragedies have injected a surge of urgency and passion into the careful plans and timetables, transforming them from carefully prioritized institutional goals into pressing ultimatums requiring immediate attention.

In late summer (2020), the administration convened a number of discussion groups of students, staff, and faculty where they shared their horror, anger, and confusion at the precipitate degradation of the nation's racial climate, their own stories of racial inequities, and recommendations for immediate action that should be taken by the university to fight the racist practices and impulses all too present in the society at large and within the community of RIT.

The stories and recommendations shared in these summer conversations are the backbone of this Action Plan. It is a plan animated by urgency, by the ultimate necessity of RIT redoubling its commitment to racial justice, and to expending the resources necessary to put the commitment into action—energy, time, thought, and dollars.

Recommendations from the summer fell into three major areas, or Pillars, each of which contains several broad initiatives that are supported by multiple action steps.

⁴ Dr. Ibram X. Kendi. From Minority to AALANA, What's in a Name? *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*. March 2, 2010.

PILLAR I: LEADERSHIP, CULTURE, AND COMMUNICATION

Membership:

Luke Auburn, Senior Communication Specialist, University Communications, Marketing and Communications

Raquel Bateman, Associate Director of training, Counseling and Psychological Services, Student Affairs

Twyla Cummings, Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate Education, Academic Affairs

Kerry Fox, Director, Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement, Student Affairs

Angela Hauser, Manager, Interpreting Team for COLA, NTID

Joe Johnston, Ombuds, Ombuds Office, Office of the President

James McCarthy, Senior Marketing Communications Specialist, Communications, Marketing and Multimedia Services, NTID

Vienna Carvalho-McGrain (Co-Convener), Associate Director of University Communications, Marketing and Communications

Maura McGrath, Sr. Talent Development Manager, Human Resources

Molly McGowan, Senior Lecturer, Department of Management, International Business, and Entrepreneurship, Saunders College of Business

Ian Mortimer, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Associate Provost for Adult and Online Education

Ken Richards, Associate Director of Marketing and Communications Intake Strategy and Project Management

Taj Smith (Co-convener), Director of Diversity Education, Diversity and Inclusion

Monica Thompson, Service Operator, Facilities Management Services-Administrative Services, Finance and Administration

Howard Ward, Associate Vice President of Student Auxiliary Services, Finance and Administration

Introduction:

Pillar I acknowledges that the diversity message, commitment and progress must emanate from RIT Leadership. Leadership reflects and creates culture; thus, Pillar I focuses on creating clear expectations for leaders and incorporating those expectations into evaluation and rewards. Further, Pillar I addresses some of the deeper cultural issues that tend to perpetuate inequality over time. Such actions include RIT's approach to communication: how we communicate, what we choose to highlight, what kinds of discussions we promote versus those we discourage.

The five Broad Initiatives of this Pillar and their supporting action steps derive from the following vision that was crafted by the members of this working group.

RIT endeavors to elevate the institutional commitment to and actual work of creating a diverse, inclusive, and anti-racist culture.

In order to address leadership, cultural, and communication barriers, a critical mass of students, staff, and faculty must be given the tools to understand their own identities and roles in actively addressing interpersonal, cultural, and structural racism within and outside of RIT.

RIT envisions a campus environment where there is intentional dialogue about and celebration of the university's rich racial and ethnic diversity. RIT imagines a skilled community that is able to proactively analyze old and new policies and traditions with a racially and ethnically inclusive lens. When interpersonal acts of racism arise, RIT will have a community practice of restorative communication and complex problem-solving in addition to reporting mechanisms.

RIT expects clear and regular communication of institutional goals related to racial diversity, pluralism, and anti-racism by senior leaders and managers. RIT expects offices, departments, colleges, or divisions to find solutions that are relevant to driving institutional goals in their areas. RIT expects accountability measures to be put in place to assess the collective ability to transition from compliance and symbolism to leveraging race and ethnicity as an institutional asset.

Broad Initiative I: RIT Leadership will set *the tone* for communicating the diversity message, commitment, and progress.

Action Step I.1: The RIT President will regularly articulate RIT's diversity commitment during presentations, highlighting both initiatives and progress.

Action Step I.2: Vice Presidents, Deans and 1st Level Managers also hold responsibility for regularly sharing diversity initiatives and progress with various audiences.

Action Step 1.3: Starting in Fall 2021, all of RIT's senior leadership and managers will be required to participate in a development program focused on inclusive leadership.

Supporting Action Step 1.3.a: Academic Affairs and Student Affairs leadership will serve as a pilot for this initiative. Further, select staff from the Division of Diversity and Inclusion and HR will be trained in how to coach future managers in completing a self-managed review process. This process should also include managers receiving tools to learn how to coach direct reports in their intercultural development.

Supporting Action Step 1.3.b: Upon completion of the pilot, leadership will determine the best path forward regarding efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

BROAD INITIATIVE II:

Require all new faculty, staff, and students to complete a compliance module that defines unconscious bias and key diversity and inclusion terminology, including race, ethnicity, prejudice, racism, and anti-racism.

Action Step II.1: Convene a cross-divisional working group to identify an internal and/or external educational source and protocols for faculty and staff use and frequency (see also Pillar III, Action Step IV.2).

BROAD INITIATIVE III:

Create a new tradition of *Day of Understanding, Solidarity and Racial Reconciliation* over the next five years to build a culture of brave, accountable, and effective dialogue about race, ethnicity, and racism.

Action Step III.1: RIT faculty, staff, students and alums who have completed research, scholarship, or have practitioner experience related to this subject will be highlighted in this one-day conference.

Supporting Action Step III.1.a: Mechanisms to enhance student participation will be employed.

Supporting Action Step III.1.b: Strategies to enhance participation by all RIT employees will be employed.

Opportunities to learn, build solidarity and problem-solve issues related to racism should be incorporated. Updates on strategic race and ethnicity goals will also be shared. This initiative would require limited funding for tech support, potential over-time cost for non-exempt staff, food, printing, and other incentives.

BROAD INITIATIVE IV:

Examine Student Conduct policies and actions for racial disparities in conduct between the non-AALANA and AALANA communities.

Action Step IV.1: Develop a team to review conduct patterns along with those who work most closely with that process. The team might include Student Conduct, Legal, Public Safety, Student Advocates, MCAS/DDI representation and a few external staff, faculty and students.

Supporting Action Step IV.1.a: Based on findings, employ education and modifications of policies and practices where needed.

BROAD INITIATIVE V: Convey the essence of RIT's diversity story in all its forms.

RIT Strategic Plan, 2018 – 2025, calls for the following in Goal 16:

Goal 16: “Create a distinctive RIT brand and develop a supporting content marketing strategy that makes use of all relevant media.”

This goal provides an opening to convey the essence of RIT's diversity story in all its form, herein with a focus on both the AALANA and ALANA communities.

Action steps that support Initiative V include the following.

Action Step V.1: Conduct primary research of AALANA audience groups to understand drivers and barriers to prospective students joining RIT.

Every marketing communications strategy starts with a sound knowledge of the target market. While there is a good body of work done on the general RIT student as well as academic areas of interest, there is a gap for segmented research based on race and ethnicity. Research objectives include understanding why AALANA students choose RIT, perceptions of RIT among their parents, and the persona for those who are current RIT students. Answers to such questions will help RIT create a solid foundation and framework for developing marketing communications strategies that appeal to each audience.

Supporting Action Step V.1.a: University Marketing and Communications will conduct quantitative and qualitative research to advance understanding of 1) Black, 2) Latinx, and 3) Native American undergraduate students within the context of pursuing an RIT education.

Supporting Action Step V.1.b: Based on the Supporting Action Steps above, University Marketing and Communications, along with the Divisions of Enrollment Management and Diversity and Inclusion, will develop recommendations for and implementation of appropriate marketing communications strategies and tactics.

Action Step V.2: Conduct a diversity audit of RIT's marketing communications techniques and tactics.

Conducting an assessment of the current state of diversity representation will provide an important baseline from which to determine the appropriate courses of action and resource requirements to achieve them. RIT aspires to intentionally attract more ALANA students, faculty, and staff.

It is also important to note that, currently, there are far more people engaged in marketing communications that operate outside of the central University Marketing and Communications

Division. Therefore, any audit and resulting prescriptive measures must accurately represent and reflect the broader multicultural mosaic being portrayed.

Supporting Action Step V.2.a: University Marketing and Communications will work with the Division of Diversity and Inclusion to determine what constitutes “diversity and inclusion” and “appropriate representation.”

Supporting Action Step V.2.b: A cross-division group will work to determine the techniques and tactics (e.g., photos, videos, social media, print publications, etc.) that will be reviewed, conduct a diversity audit, and develop protocols for the future.

Action Step V.3: Enhance education and understanding of diversity and inclusion to improve marketing and communications to these audiences.

To ensure all of those engaged in marketing and communications across the RIT campus have a strong and current understanding of diversity and inclusion, programmatic and learning opportunities will be offered and required.

Supporting Action Step V.3.a: Participation in programs, mini-courses, workshops, and other learning opportunities that will educate RIT faculty and staff about the history of racism, its continued presence on college campuses, and its impact on AALANA students (see Pillar II, Action Step II.2.b).

Supporting Action Step V.3.b: Examination of best practices from other universities (and other sectors) will also help to provide pathways and suggested guidelines for our campus-wide marketers and communicators.

Action Step V.4: Enhance strategic diversity and inclusion marketing communications and promotion.

The information and understanding gained from Action Steps V.1 – V.3 will provide the platform from which to shine an ever-brighter spotlight on RIT’s ALANA faculty, students, staff, and alumni.

Supporting Action Step V.4.a: Highlight diversity stories (including diversity scholars and their research, featuring alumni of diverse backgrounds, etc.) through the four main channels of content distribution.

Supporting Action Step V.4.b: Coordinated, complementary, and consistent meeting among RIT marketers and communicators will ensure an enhanced understanding and focus on diversity and inclusion.

PILLAR II: AFRICAN AMERICAN, LATINO AMERICAN (LATINX), NATIVE AMERICAN (AALANA)⁵ STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND SUCCESS

Membership:

Candi Boston, Associate Director of Alumni Relations, Alumni and Constituent Engagement

Teresa Brown, Assistant Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships, Enrollment Management

Gerard Buckley, NTID President, RIT Vice President and Dean

Sally Douglas, Senior Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Enrollment Management

Harold Fields, Director of Residence Life, Student Affairs

Kit Mayberry (Co-convener), Sr. Advisor for Diversity Outreach, Enrollment, and Retention, Diversity and Inclusion

LaVerne McQuiller-Williams, Interim Dean, College of Liberal Arts

Stacy Nation-Knapper, Director of Year One Programs, Student Affairs

Richard Newman, Professor of History, College of Liberal Arts

S. Manian Ramkumar, Dean, College of Engineering Technology

Tomicka Wagstaff (Co-convener), Assistant Vice President for Academic Access and Success, Diversity & Inclusion

Introduction:

Higher education measures student success by a number of metrics, beginning in the pre-enrollment phase, when applications are accepted or declined. Metrics reflecting academic performance (grades, grade point averages, year-to-year persistence) are arguably the most critical, since in most cases they determine the ultimate outcome of the student's college career — graduation.

In achieving its strategic vision of serving “the greater good” and graduating students who are “constructive agents of positive change,”⁶ RIT is resolute in its commitment to recruit, retain, and graduate a student population that mirrors the demographics of the U.S. population at large and that is fully prepared for informed participation in a diverse civil society.

The two Broad Initiatives of Pillar II and their supporting action steps derive from the following vision that was crafted by the members of this working group.

⁵ Dr. Ibram X. Kendi. *From Minority to AALANA, What's in a Name?* Diverse Issues in Higher Education. March 2, 2010.

⁶ RIT Strategic Plan 2018-2025. *Overview*. “RIT's ‘New Education’”

RIT will be the university of choice for AALANA students seeking a culturally engaging campus environment and an education fully supportive of their academic and personal success.

It is important to note that these initiatives and action steps are not new to RIT: they restate and extend a number of critical goals contained in the current strategic plan, *Greatness Through Difference: 2018-2025*.

BROAD INITIATIVE I: Increasing the percentage of AALANA First Time, Full Time Freshman (FTFTF) and Graduate (FTFTG) students

Goal 2 of the RIT Strategic Plan 2018-2025, calls for RIT to “Continue to diversify the undergraduate student population by gender, race [emphasis added], and nationality.” Initiative I and its action steps could be read as a re-focusing of this goal.

The specific goal of Initiative I is to increase the current strategic plan goal for the percentage of AALANA FTFTF students from 18% to 20% with a specific emphasis on increasing the percentage of Black students (6.6% in Fall 2020).

The following actions are recommended as likely to support the success of this Initiative.

Action Step I.1: Enhance and establish specific, accountable pathway programs for AALANA students that leverages the best work of the RIT K-12 University Center and Multicultural Center for Academic Success (MCAS) and other cohort programs.

Supporting Action Step I.1.a: Form a committee of Admissions and Financial Aid staff, faculty, and students to consider questions like the following:

- i. For schools with high numbers of AALANA graduates, can the university determine whether sufficient college application guidance is offered, and if it is not, can RIT provide it?
- ii. Since we know that students who visit campus are more likely to attend RIT than those who do not, can the university fund such visits? Could RIT bring a number of these students to campus for a night or two and provide full funding?
- iii. Are there ways to better include the Multicultural Center for Academic Success (MCAS) in the pre-enrollment process?
- iv. Is RIT using race as a significant criterion in admissions decisions? (“Postsecondary institutions may develop admissions procedures designed to achieve diversity, including procedures that involve admissions preferences for certain groups of students.”)⁷

⁷ Joint Department of Education and Department of Justice Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Racer to Achieve Postsecondary Education.

Action Step I.2: Create an Admissions Diversity Team (staff and students) charged with reviewing undergraduate and graduate student enrollment management strategies, policies, and practices and advising enrollment management leadership on ways to increase AALANA applications, admissions, and acceptances.

Action Step I.3: Identify, market, and award untapped scholarships—from foundations, corporations, friends and alumni.

Action Step I.4: Build additional partnerships with strategically selected high schools and HBCUs modeled after the existing RIT-Rochester Prep High School (RPHS) partnership and the Future Faculty Career Exploration Program.

The goal of these partnerships will be to establish early relationships between prospective undergraduate and graduate students and RIT students and RIT. Students should have the opportunity to interact with RIT faculty, to visit the RIT campus multiple times during their high school years, including initiatives that are already taking place such as the Native Outreach Day and at least one overnight visit, and to be guided by RIT personnel in the application process. Among the partners to be considered are the Milton Hershey School, additional Uncommon charter high schools, and the Young Women's College Prep Charter School.

BROAD INITIATIVE II: Improve persistence and graduation rates among AALANA students and reduce disparities between AALANA and non-AALANA students.

The RIT Strategic Plan, 2018 – 2025, calls for the following in goals 3 and 21:

Goal 3: “Improve graduation rates across all demographics.”

Goal 21: “Establish new and strengthen existing community partnerships with schools and cultural institutions.”

No changes are recommended in the current strategic plan goals; however, Initiative II contains specific strategies in support of these goals.

Actions for Initiative II focus on developing new and improving existing practices, programs, and relationships to enhance the academic performance and personal development of AALANA students.

Action Step II.1: Implement initiatives that increase persistence and retention among AALANA students.

Supporting Action Step II.1.a: Recharge the RIT Student Success Steering Committee to lead or establish a cross-divisional team charged with developing an empirically grounded understanding of the unique contributors and barriers to AALANA student success and leading the implementation of initiatives to increase retention and persistence among AALANA students.

Supporting Action Step II.1.b: Conduct a growth and funding study of the Multicultural Center for Academic Success (MCAS) and other Division of Diversity and Inclusion AALANA undergraduate and graduate student support programs (Native American Future Stewards Program, etc.). Identify those programs that have the largest opportunity to impact significant numbers of RIT AALANA students and make their increased staff, programming, and space a university priority. A preliminary analysis of students affiliated with DDI programs shows positive indicators of student success.⁸

Supporting Action Step II.1.c: Increase the number and proportion of AALANA students participating in RIT's Honors Program.

Action Step II.2: Identify and deploy new ways to strengthen AALANA students' sense of belonging to RIT.

The retention literature explains that some Black and Latinx students face unique adjustment challenges upon entry to predominately white institutions. These challenges can include such stressors as “lack of knowledge about the college process, institutional racism, poor health and energy, social isolation, and family and financial problems.”⁹ Students also report the importance of seeing “themselves reflected in the faculty and curriculum to which they are exposed to create a sense of belongingness and inclusiveness.”¹⁰ Microaggressions from both students and professors, racial stress, racial trauma, racial battle fatigue and stereotype threat are among other adjustment challenges that may cause psychological and physiological stress that threatens the well-being of the student and their sense of belonging to the institution. These challenges will be a part of the charge of the cross-division committee identified in Step II.1.a. In addition, the literature on the AALANA collegiate experience provides strong support for the following supporting actions:

Supporting Action Step II.2.a: Select and administer a nationally-normed, student, staff and faculty climate survey that focuses on race (see Pillar III, Broad Initiative III).

Supporting Action Step II.2.b: Create a racial identity development and anti-racism program consisting of mini-courses, workshops, and other learning opportunities that educate RIT faculty and student-facing staff about the history of racism, its continued presence on college campuses, and its impact on ALANA students. The RIT on-campus community would learn to better define race, understand racism, develop effective intercultural communication and incorporate antiracism strategies into daily interactions and workplace operations.

This supporting action will include resources on classroom practices and interactional strategies that enhance the experience of inclusion among underrepresented students.

⁸ David P. Wick and Elizabeth A. Bremer. DDI Program Persistence and Graduation Rate Analysis. December 12, 2020.

⁹ Childs, J. “Black Student Networks at Predominantly White Universities in Texas: Year 1.” 2019. (<https://www.greatertexasfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Childs-Final-2019.pdf>), 2.

¹⁰ Advancing Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education. 2016. p. 37.

Supporting Action Step II.2.c: Working with appropriate governance committees, evaluate the extent to which curricular offerings appropriately reflect the commitments and priorities of RIT with regard to diversity and inclusion.

This supporting action should result in recommendations to close curricular gaps in this area, including, for example, a Black studies major and new immersions or minors, and the evaluation of proposals for a common course or intellectual experience around race and racial justice. AALANA students will be included in these evaluations.

Supporting Action Step II.2.d: Enhance the research and education climate by proposing a Center on Race and Justice and make funding a development priority.

PILLAR III: FACULTY AND STAFF RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND ADVANCEMENT

Membership:

Jodi Boita, Executive Director of Assessment, Technology, and Communication, Student Affairs

Donathan Brown (Co-convener), Assistant Provost and Assistant Vice President for Faculty Diversity and Recruitment, Diversity & Inclusion

Kijana Crawford, Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts

Erica Ford, International Student Advisor, International Student Services, Student Affairs

Joseph Hill, Assistant Professor of ASL and Interpreting Education, NTID Assistant Dean for NTID Faculty Recruitment and Retention

Sophia Maggelakis, Dean, College of Science

Mindy Magyar, Associate Professor of Industrial Design, College of Art & Design and Faculty Associate for AALANA Faculty

Natosha McDonald, Director of Talent Management, Human Resources, Finance & Administration

Jo Ellen Pinkham (Co-convener), Associate Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, Human Resources, Finance & Administration

Sandra Whitmore, Senior Director of Operations, Diversity & Inclusion

Introduction:

The five Broad Initiatives of this Pillar and their supporting action steps derive from the following vision that was crafted by the members of this working group.

RIT faculty and staff will reflect the excellent and diverse global community we serve by way of intentionally recruiting, retaining and advancing faculty, staff and administrators who reflect the diversity of the global community and who expect, value and support an institution destined to impact the greater good through an inclusive climate, collaborative engagement, innovative approaches, and social consciousness.

Again, these initiatives and action steps are not new to RIT: they restate and extend a number of critical goals contained in the RIT Strategic Plan, *Greatness Through Difference: 2018-2025*.

The RIT Strategic Plan, 2018 – 2025, calls for the following in goals 5 and 6:

Goal 5: “Continue to diversify the faculty and administration by gender, race [emphasis added], and nationality with an emphasis on increasing the number and percent of female faculty in STEM fields and AALANA *faculty* [emphasis added] in all fields.”

Goal 6: “Hire, promote, and retain an increasingly *diverse* [emphasis added] and outstanding staff in numbers that are commensurate with the size of the faculty and student body.”

Again, no changes are recommended in the current strategic plan goals; however, the initiatives that follow contain specific strategies in support of these goals.

BROAD INITIATIVE I: Create and support formal structures, broader engagement in and accountability for DEI work (e.g., committees, governance involvement, dedicated staff diversity-related positions, appraisals, etc.)

Action Step I.1: Employ intentional and comprehensive efforts to incorporate and reflect DEI work across all constituencies including requiring DEI related information/goals in performance appraisals, plans of work, annual reports, etc.

Action Step I.2: Comprehensively examine current systems, policies and procedures to identify and remedy structural bias (i.e., pay equity, relocation support, pre-funding professional development, turnover, promotions, other).

Action Step I.3: Recognize the valuable contributions of AALANA faculty and staff, support and make possible the participation in shared governance (Staff Council and Academic Senate) and involvement in other DEI activities by adjusting workflow and/or providing other supports accordingly.

BROAD INITIATIVE II: Examine, revise and enhance current hiring practices for both staff and faculty with an eye towards expanding our ability to be creative and opportunistic in the way we approach inclusive hiring.

Action Step II.1: Create dedicated position(s) focusing on outreach and recruitment of *diverse staff* with responsibilities and programming similar to those of the Office of Faculty Diversity and Recruitment (OFDR).

Supporting Action Step I.1.a: NTID will create specialist resources for their communities.

Action Step II.2: Enhance personnel and funding support for the Office of Faculty Diversity and Recruitment that allows a greater range of innovative outreach initiatives aimed at prospective AALANA faculty (i.e., Black/African American, Indigenous, and other people of color).

Supporting Action Step II.2.a: Recognizing the different challenges, barriers and approaches for recruiting AALANA faculty and staff office to ensure dedicated personnel to better focus recruitment and retention efforts.

Supporting Action Step II.2.b: Enhance FFCEP structure and funding to invite a larger cohort of scholars to campus.

Action Step II.3: Institute/revise search and educational processes that support inclusive, bias-free decisions with attention given to job description development, placement of the job advertisements, inclusive search committee composition, interview best practices, candidate evaluation, and hosting campus interviews.

Supporting Action Step II.3.a: Actively work towards diversifying membership on every search committee.

Supporting Action Step II.3.b: Require current Inclusive Hiring Training for all search chairs and committee members.

Action Step II.4: Build relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Native American Scholars Initiative (NASI) universities, and identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership such as dual degree programs and faculty exchanges.

Action Step II.5: Accelerate establishment of a permanent rolling Strategic Hire Fund to enable target of opportunity hires that would also support, among other RIT hiring initiatives, proactive recruiting of outstanding AALANA faculty, both within and outside standard searches.

Action Step II.6: Make the establishment of Endowed Chair positions for disciplines related to African American, Latinx and Native American studies a development priority.

Action Step II.7: Create a database of possible candidates, similar to OFDR's Scholars' Network, to capture potential ALANA staff and faculty candidates.

BROAD INITIATIVE III: Identify and deploy methods for strengthening AALANA faculty and staff sense of belonging to the RIT community.

Action Step III.1: Examine and revise onboarding processes and materials to support new faculty and staff in finding community at RIT (outside of HR orientation as it currently stands). A holistic assessment will address the need for unique community resources (e.g., schools, health care, hair salons, places of worship, affinity groups, etc.), and underscore the importance of incorporating the entire family into the RIT relationship.

Action Step III.2: Enhance/Create a Dual Career and Relocation Specialist role to support both faculty and staff hires.

Action Step III.3: Develop formal designated mentoring programs for faculty and staff.

BROAD INITIATIVE IV: Offer programs and learning opportunities for managers and employees to understand their agency and institutional role in creating a more diverse and inclusive institution.

Action Step IV.1: Develop manager education around what it means to be an inclusive leader (required for anyone who is a supervisor).

Supporting Action Step IV.1.a: Create a program for supervisors to develop skill sets and confidence to lay out individual DEI plans with clear action items and have related conversations with every employee.

Action Step IV.2: Institute an annual DEI training requirement for all employees related to creating an inclusive culture (see also Pillar I, Broad Initiative II, Action Step II.1).

DEI training programs may include implicit bias, micro-aggressions, bystander awareness, etc.

Action Step IV.3: Host conferences whose mission is focused on diversity and inclusion.

Conferences might include AISES (American Indian Science and Engineering Society), SREB (Southern Regional Education Board) — Doctoral Scholars Program, SACNAS (Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science), AABHE (American Association of Blacks in Higher Education), NAAASA (National Association of African American Studies & Affiliates), NADOHE (National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education) and others.

BROAD INITIATIVE V: Develop and support career progression pathways for AALANA faculty and staff.

Action Step V.1: Develop formal programs (sponsorship, leadership, succession planning) for both AALANA and non-AALANA faculty and staff to become institutional leaders. Human Resources would take the lead in establishing such a program for staff. For faculty, perhaps this can be curated through the Office of Faculty Affairs via the Faculty Career Development team.

Action Step V.2: Explore pathway progression program to review employees' skill sets and help them identify opportunities to develop the skills, talents and abilities to position them for next steps.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the broad initiatives and supporting actions identified undergird the three pillars of the RIT Action Plan for Race and Ethnicity— *leadership, culture, and communication; student recruitment and success; and faculty and staff recruitment, retention and advancement*. These pillars and supporting actions offer an important framework to guide the university in efforts to expand our reach and create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive society.

APPENDIX A

Reexamining Aspects of Our Own History

RIT recognizes that we gather on the traditional territory of the Onöndowa'ga:' or "the people of the Great Hill," in English known as Seneca people, "the keeper of the western door." Although we honor the land on which RIT was built and recognize the unique relationship that the Indigenous stewards have with this land, it remains unclear when RIT first admitted students who identified as African, Latinx, Asian and/or Native American (ALANA). According to the RIT Archive Collections, "it appears as though the first African American students entered the Rochester Athenaeum and Mechanics Institute (renamed RIT in 1944) during the early 1900s. For instance, in 1906 Fredericka Sprague, the granddaughter of Frederick Douglass, took classes at the Institute. There are several other instances of African American students attending the school during the early 20th century as well¹¹."

The Black Awareness Coordinating Committee (BACC), RIT's first cultural club, first formed in October 1968 and was officially recognized as an organization the following year. The founding members included Laura Delaney '01, Herb Elchelberger '70, Kenneth Everett '69, Thomas Gray, Eddie Hill '70, James Manning '70, Ostein Truitt '70, Alvina Walker, Gil Whisnaut '72, Walter Whitney '69 and John Wilson '70. Today, more than 28 cultural student clubs and organizations are recognized at RIT¹².

When BACC was founded, there were few students at RIT who identified as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). BACC worked to increase representation on campus, build a strong voice for the African American student, and educate the RIT community about Black culture. According to its founders, it was not easy but within the first year, RIT formed a committee to recruit more Black students and agreed to offer Black history courses. RIT Archives Collections explain, "In 1969, a Black studies program was offered with courses such as "Afro-American History," "Nativism, Racism, and Anti-Semitism," "West African History," and "Sociology of Intergroup Relations." BACC was also the first RIT organization to honor the great civil rights leader, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and that effort continues today with our annual Expressions of King's Legacy programming.

In addition to BACC, RIT's historical roots saw the welcoming of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) and the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) in the '60s.

¹¹ RIT Archive Collections. [Minority students collection](#). Historical Information for Minority Students at RIT. 1906, 1961 – 1989.

¹² Campus Life: [Clubs & Organizations](#). 2020.

The following table from the RIT Archives Collection provides information on the number of African, Latinx, Asian, and Native American (ALANA) students at the Institute at the start of the fall term from 1976-1979 and in 1984.

	Black Non-Hispanic	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic	White Non-Hispanic	Total Minority	Percent Minority
1976	295	29	67	50	11,651	441	3.65%
1977	327	28	65	66	11,932	486	3.91%
1978	460	33	114	84	11,698	691	5.58%
1979	337	26	132	96	13,315	591	4.25%
1984	413	37	252	138	11,568	840	6.77%

In 1980, a plan was developed to increase the number of minority and disadvantaged students in the RIT community, both faculty and students¹³.

Gradually more services were added to support AALANA students. For example, “The Rochester Institute of Technology’s (RIT) Office of Minority Affairs was established in 1982 under the direction of Fred W. Smith, [vice president for Student Affairs]. The number of students from minority populations attending the Institute had been gradually growing. The school’s administration hoped that by increasing its number of services, programs, and aid provided to minority students, the Institute could encourage more minority students to attend RIT. Over the years, the office sponsored various events such as a Black History Month celebration, Hispanic Heritage Month, and orientation activities for campus freshmen¹⁴.”

In the years that followed, RIT’s commitment to diverse student, faculty and staff populations increased. RIT established a President’s Commission on Cultural Diversity in the ‘80s, later changed to the President’s Commission for Promoting Pluralism in 1991 “because it was felt that the title, ‘promoting pluralism,’ better mirrored the work that needed to be done by the commission¹⁵”. University Diversity Plans, an Assistant Provost for Diversity, and the Center for Women and Gender were established in the ‘90s. A “faculty recruitment manager” dedicated to recruiting and retaining diverse faculty of color and women, the Multicultural Center for Academic Success (MCAS), the Future Faculty Career Exploration Program (FFCEP), a President’s Commission on Women (PCW), an Office of Faculty Diversity & Recruitment, and the RIT Board of Trustees Diversity Subcommittee were all established in the 2000s. A host of other diversity initiatives supported through the President’s Office, RIT Divisions and Colleges in the 2000s and 2010s, were established, including RIT’s Vice President & Associate Provost for Diversity & Inclusion; the Division of Diversity & Inclusion (DDI),

¹³ RIT Archive Collections. [Minority students collection](#). Historical Information for Minority Students at RIT. 1906, 1961 – 1989.

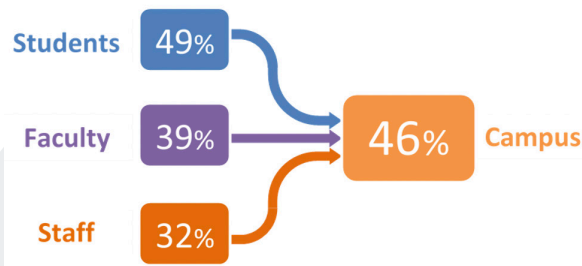
¹⁴ RIT Archive Collections. [RIT Office of Minority Student Affairs records](#). 1984-1993.

¹⁵ RIT Archive Collections. [RIT Commission for Promoting Pluralism records](#). “Historical Information for Commission for Promoting Pluralism. 1985 – 2011.

the [Destler/Johnson Rochester City Scholars](#), [AdvanceRIT](#), [Diversity Education](#), [Diversity Theater](#), the [Center for Advancing STEM Teaching, Learning and Evaluation \(CASTLE\)](#), [Men of Color, Honor and Ambition \(MOCHA\)](#), [Mosaic Center](#), the [Native American Future Stewards Program](#), [No Voice Zone](#), the [Q Center](#), [Society of Women Engineers](#), [Spectrum Support Program Services \(SSP\)](#), [Women of Color, Honor and Ambition \(WOCHA\)](#), several groups supporting Women—in “Science” ([WISE](#)), “Engineering” ([WE@RIT](#)), “Technology” ([WIT](#)), and/or “Computing” ([WiC](#)), the Executive Diversity Advisory Committee (focused on staff diversity) and a College of Science (COS) [Howard Hughes Medical Institute Inclusive Excellence Program \(HHMI\)](#). Add to this tapestry of initiatives through several decades, diverse curricular options and over 300 total student clubs and organizations to capture a university committed to diversity and inclusion.

APPENDIX B RIT Diversity Index

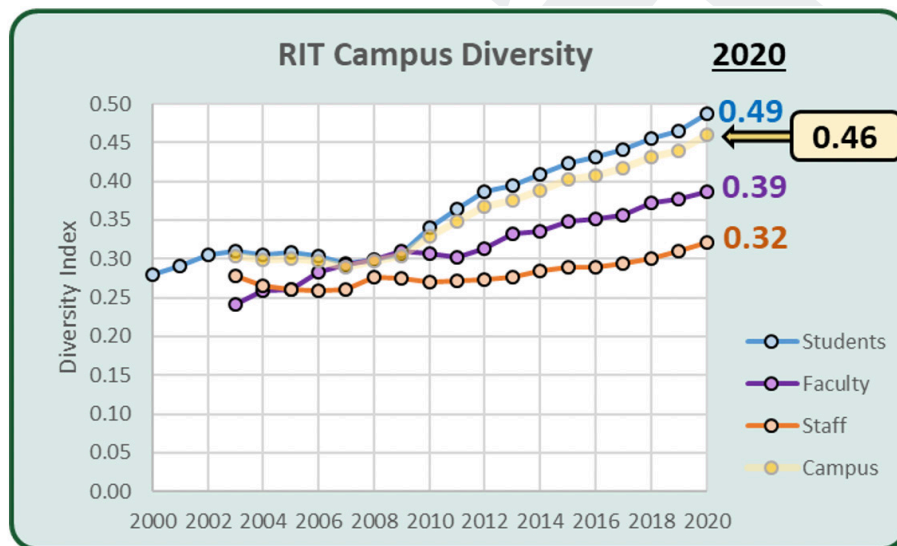
Today, to quantify diversity in the broadest capture of racial/ethnic differences, in a manner that is inclusive of all domestic categories, we ask the question: **What is the chance that two people chosen at random are of different race/ethnicity?**



RIT includes seven mutually exclusive categories in the index: white, African American and Black, Hispanic and Latinx, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native, and two or more races. All groups are represented—not just those that are historically underrepresented.¹⁶

In 2020, across the RIT campus there is a 46% chance (students – 49%, faculty – 39%, staff – 32%). By 2021 we expect to cross an important milestone for students where that occurrence becomes more likely than not (exceeding 50%), a significant departure from 20 years ago where it was merely 28%.

The *Diversity Index* documents this probability historically (scale: 0 – 1), painting a picture of how student, faculty, and staff diversity have evolved over time.



¹⁶Drs. David P. Wick and Keith B. Jenkins. *Shaping an Institutional Narrative Around Diversity*. INSIGHT Into Diversity. February 19, 2018.

Further diversifying the RIT landscape are myriad students, faculty and staff who also differ by gender, sexual, religious, first generation, socioeconomic, veteran, disability, and international status, among others. Diversity and inclusion are fundamental aspects of RIT's identity as an institution and are intrinsically tied to its historic strength as one of America's most innovative and forward-looking universities.

DRAFT